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Chairman:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. van der Pluijm (Vice-Chairman)	(Belgium)
later:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 87: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

(b) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.16

1. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Noting that the text of the draft itself was not new, he highlighted paragraph 2 and said that the El Niño phenomenon had caused a series of natural disasters in a number of the countries members of the Group of 77 and China.

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.21

2. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, highlighting the eighth and tenth preambular paragraphs. In the tenth preambular paragraph, "paragraph 37" should read "paragraph 35".

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.22

3. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Natural disasters and vulnerability" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Noting that it was a new draft, he drew attention in particular to paragraphs 1 and 3 and said that, in paragraph 1, "paragraph 37" should be replaced by "paragraph 35".

(d) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.17

4. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He drew attention to the third, fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs as well as to paragraphs 3 and 4.

(e) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.18

5. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Convention on Biological Diversity" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Noting that, like the other draft resolutions, it also referred to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, he drew attention to paragraphs 4, 7 and 8.

(f) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.19

6. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In the fourteenth preambular paragraph, the words "on climate and disasters" should be inserted between the words "group" and "established". He drew particular attention to paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.20

7. **Mr. Nino Gómez** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Among other things, the draft suggested the convening of an international meeting in 2004 to review the Barbados Programme of Action. Owing to the importance of the proposed meeting to small island developing States, the draft suggested that the meeting should include a summit segment.

Announcement concerning sponsorship of draft resolutions

8. **The Chairman** announced new sponsors of draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 84 (c). Afghanistan had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.7; Burkina Faso, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Tajikistan and Swaziland had become

sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.11; and the Republic of Moldova and the United States of America had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.14.

Agenda item 89: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/57/137 and A/57/211)

9. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/57/137), said that there had been uneven progress in reducing poverty. Some countries were on track to meet the Millennium Goal of halving the number of people living on less than $1 a day by 2015, while most lagged behind in the face of serious economic, social and political obstacles. The report noted that many of those obstacles to successful poverty eradication could be overcome by the judicious adaptation and application of best practices and lessons learned in eradicating poverty around the world. However, it might be necessary to establish a comprehensive and easily accessible database of information on those best practices and lessons learned, which should be shared widely within the international community.

10. The report also highlighted the improving outlook for a reversal of past trends in official development assistance (ODA). Indeed, an increasing share of ODA was going to basic social services and a growing number of countries were benefiting from the relief provided by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative. However, there was a need to close the gap in financial resources required for countries to attain the millennium development goals. More needed to be accomplished, and soon, otherwise the lesson learned by 2015 might be that, owing to a lack of international cooperation, the goals could not be met.

11. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposal to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication (A/57/137), he noted that the Johannesburg Summit had given a clear endorsement to the establishment of the fund. The fund would, inter alia, provide additional assistance to halve extreme poverty worldwide by 2015; finance measures to raise living standards in impoverished communities; operate as a trust fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that would not duplicate existing operational programmes; and receive voluntary contributions in cash and in kind from individuals, foundations, organizations and the private sector. It would not divert the flow of funding allocated to ODA. A world solidarity fund could go some way towards bridging the resources gap that presented a major impediment to the achievement of the millennium development goals.

12. **Mr. Carpio Govea** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was very difficult for some countries to achieve even minimum standards of living. The Group of 77 and China shared the concern of the Secretary-General that, while best practices could lead to innovative solutions to problems, they might not apply equally well to all situations and might need to be adapted to suit the social, economic, cultural and historical conditions in specific countries.

13. The Group of 77 and China also welcomed the establishment of the world solidarity fund for poverty eradication and the encouragement of the private sector and citizens to work with Governments to fund poverty eradication efforts. With specific reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of the fund (A/57/137), he said the United Nations had entered a new phase and had been called upon to take immediate measures to eradicate poverty.

14. He welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) designed to overcome the barriers to development through the combined efforts of the countries of the region, the United Nations system and other interested parties.

15. All stakeholders should seek new mechanisms for poverty eradication and implement those yet to be realized. He appealed to the developed countries to fulfil their obligations, including those undertaken with respect to ODA, to provide new and adequate financial flows, to strengthen technical and financial cooperation, and to establish best practices with developing countries through effective channels of interaction allowing greater access for products of the developing countries to global markets. Although the countries of the Group of 77 and China had the largest concentration of people living in extreme poverty, they were also endowed with vast supplies of natural resources. It was therefore time to address that paradox and to work towards a more just and equitable world.

16. **Ms. Løj** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, said that the report of the Secretary-General highlighted the enormous challenges to be faced in order to fulfil the commitments of the millennium development goals with respect to poverty eradication. The report also stressed the need for urgent action and underscored the role of best practices and lessons learned in the fight against poverty.

17. The United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/57/270) had established clear time-bound targets, and an overall framework for concerted action. In conjunction with the outcomes of the international conferences of the previous decade, the commitment to poverty eradication as an overarching goal was incontestable. She paid a tribute to the African leaders who had taken an impressive lead in devising the NEPAD initiative and urged developed countries to honour their commitments to increase ODA, improve effectiveness, and support a stronger voice for developing countries in international economic and financial decision-making processes. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the imperative of partnership and implementation had also been emphasized. The implementation of the outcomes of the conferences was part of a wider process aimed at fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Declaration and achieving the millennium development goals.

18. The European Union had pledged to increase its collective ODA, to ensure implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative and to improve market access, creating new export opportunities for developing countries. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, although economic growth was undoubtedly a driving factor in poverty reduction, income growth on its own was insufficient to ensure that poverty eradication targets could be met, and pro-poor growth was needed.

19. Good governance demanded the building and strengthening of democratic institutions, respect for and promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and effective and just delivery of public services. Furthermore, the primary responsibility rested with each individual country, working to create a sound macroeconomic environment and an appropriate framework for investment and trade that was supportive of sustainable development. All countries must prioritize investment in health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation and environmental sustainability. Domestic policies in the area of taxation, income redistribution, decent work rights, the fight against corruption and peace-building were also fundamental.

20. At the same time, the European Union recognized that without international assistance many of the least developed countries (LDCs) could not escape the vicious circle of poverty. With regard to enhanced aid effectiveness, she noted the proposal of the Secretary-General on strengthening the Organization in order to clarify the comparative advantages of United Nations entities in the provision of technical assistance. Further cooperation, coordination and harmonization of efforts at all levels were required, and donors must make greater efforts to support national development strategies. The European Union was pleased to note that an increasing number of developing countries had elaborated comprehensive poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) which provided useful frameworks for donor coordination.

21. The European Union wished to acknowledge the importance of developing and disseminating information on best practices and lessons learned, as outlined by the Secretary-General in his report, and supported his conclusion that participatory policy-making, gender sensitivity, community development, a strong civil society and integrated environmental management were essential.

22. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) said that, with the downturn of the world economy which had characterized the period following the events of 11 September 2001, the outlook for the attainment of the millennium development goals was bleak. Regrettably, prospects had not significantly improved since then and progress had been slow and uneven. However, the outcomes of two major United Nations conferences had provided good reason for cautious optimism. The International Conference on Financing for Development had resulted in agreement on the main obstacles to development and poverty reduction, and in pledges from some donor countries to increase ODA. Real progress towards poverty eradication would be made only when all donors accepted the concept of reaching the 0.7 per cent target within a clear time frame. The results of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable

Development had confirmed unilateral pledges made at the International Conference as well as the targets of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and the millennium development goals. The focus on Africa in many recent initiatives and the support of the international community for NEPAD gave additional reason for optimism in the continued struggle to eradicate poverty in that continent.

23. Discussions on the world solidarity fund, operating as a trust fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), had entered a productive phase. In the hope that the solidarity fund would prove to be a useful mechanism and would supplement the efforts of other important United Nations bodies to combat poverty, Norway expressed its support for the establishment of the solidarity fund in accordance with the recommendations of UNDP.

24. *Mr. van der Pluijm (Belgium), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

25. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that prolonged poverty and underdevelopment caused many serious international problems, including armed conflict, social upheaval and humanitarian crises. The international community, therefore, had a long way to go in achieving its objective of poverty eradication, which ultimately depended on development. Developing countries should tailor their mode of development to their specific circumstances, with the support of the international community.

26. Firm action should be taken to provide adequate financial resources for poverty reduction. He joined previous speakers in urging donors to increase ODA and to honour their commitments regarding foreign direct investment, market access, technology transfer and debt relief. In their efforts to fight poverty, developing countries needed not only assistance, but also trade and investment.

27. Ownership in the execution of country programmes was important to developing countries, and should be strengthened. On the basis of lessons learned, agencies and institutions had expressed willingness to enhance ownership in the work of poverty reduction. However, many developing countries were still forced to accept terms and conditions that were not in line with their national situations, in exchange for aid from the developed countries, seriously impeding their efforts to choose the right path to development.

28. As the most populous country in the world, China's economic development efforts would have great impact on global development. The Government remained committed to such development and to raising living standards. Over the previous two years of reform, China had achieved stable and rapid economic growth, which had led to social development. The number of people living in extreme poverty had been reduced from 250 million in 1979 to the current level of 30 million, and the proportion of the rural population living in extreme poverty had also fallen from 30.7 per cent to 3 per cent. Those achievements were mainly attributable to the fact that China had followed a path to development which was compatible with its own conditions, incorporating poverty reduction into the national plan of economic and social development.

29. In spite of the progress already achieved, China was still a developing country with a low income per capita. It would continue its efforts and strengthen cooperation with other countries and international organizations in order to promote the realization of poverty eradication.

30. **Mr. Reddy** (India) recalled that, in recognition of widening disparities, and cognizant of the shared responsibility posed by poverty eradication, leaders attending the Millennium Summit had agreed to work towards freeing humanity from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty and to ensure that everyone could enjoy the right to development. Concerted action, specifically targeted at improving well-being, would be required at all levels in order to achieve the collective goal of poverty eradication.

31. In Asia, the largest number of the world's poor, approximately 500 million, subsisted on less than one dollar a day. India had evolved a national strategy complementing the acceleration of economic growth, focusing on the provision of basic services for improving the quality of life for the poorest segments of society through specific programmes. It had been successful in reducing poverty from 38.9 per cent in 1987 to 23 per cent in 2000, and hoped to further reduce poverty to a level of 10 per cent by 2012.

32. Developing countries needed the support of the international community if they were to succeed in

eradicating poverty, and there was clearly a need to reverse the trend of declining ODA. Funds that had been pledged should be made available, and further funding commitments should be made so as to reach the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. There should also be a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory trading system that would address the concerns of developing countries and ensure enhanced and predictable market access for their exports so that they could take advantage of trade liberalization. Furthermore, stability in the international financial and monetary systems was necessary if the developing countries were to eradicate poverty. The sole criterion by which India would judge the success of the Millennium Development Goals Campaign, the initiation of which it welcomed, would be the extent to which it resulted in enhanced funds for development. India hoped that at its current session the General Assembly would finalize the modalities for the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication, and called on the international community to contribute generously to such a fund, which could be operated by UNDP. The fund should support requests from national Governments for financing community-based projects. It was time to move into an implementation phase if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved; based on the record of the past two years, those goals were still far from being achieved.

33. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that the existence of widespread poverty in the midst of global prosperity was undeniably the most serious challenge confronting the world. Poverty had been viewed in the context of income poverty alone, but it was a multi-dimensional phenomenon requiring a broad-based approach. In spite of the solemn pledges made at a series of major conferences and summits, poverty had continued to grow, and the social and economic gap between the haves and have-nots was widening. It was necessary to focus on practical action, rather than rhetoric, in attacking the problem. People needed to be placed at the centre of development, and all stakeholders needed to take coherent, collaborative action. While primary responsibility lay with the developing countries themselves, the developed countries needed to share the responsibility, since they largely controlled international finance, technology and trade, and set the rules of the game. Poverty needed to be attacked from all directions, but preferably through the development of human resources, chiefly by promoting education and health. If developing countries enjoyed an environment in which their people could develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accordance with their means and interests, they could effectively deal with the challenges of poverty, illiteracy, hunger, malnutrition and disease. The deadly combination of extreme poverty and extreme indebtedness had plunged a large number of low-income countries into a downward spiral: debt relief should be an integral part of any comprehensive concept of poverty eradication, and would go a long way towards helping countries which were trying to help themselves through financing credible, home-grown reform programmes. Trade was another area which could boost economic growth, generate employment and reduce poverty; it was also the single most important external source for financing development. Increased market access was an effective way for developing countries to achieve sustainability. Official development assistance also played a critical role in meeting development needs, and there was a clear need for it to be increased. Pakistan hoped that the Committee would finalize the modalities for the world solidarity fund for poverty eradication, and that all countries in a position to do so would contribute generously to it.

34. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that most developing countries were continuing to direct their resources towards the eradication of poverty, even as they faced an economic downturn, but they were constrained in their efforts. As the Secretary-General had mentioned in his report, it was unlikely that at the current rate of progress most of the millennium development goals would be reached by 2015 in a number of regions. To deal with that situation, he had once again urged the international community to mobilize all its efforts. Those efforts had to consist of augmented ODA, increased trade access, deeper and more rapid debt relief, and the channelling of more productive investments. While the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/211) had noted a number of innovative "best practices" in Bangladesh, such as the Grameen Bank's microfinance and the female schooling support programme, it did not explain how such micro-activities could be linked with macro-efforts, and their successful elements factored into broad policy discussions in the context of the General Assembly, international bodies, agencies and institutions. The challenge lay in deciding how such "best practices" could be scaled up or replicated in other countries.

35. The world solidarity fund for poverty eradication was aimed at sustaining and supporting indigenous endeavours to eradicate poverty globally, particularly at grass-roots level. Most such flexible, indigenous efforts were small in scale, but contributed a good deal in terms of social and human development across the developing world. It was important to monitor the adequacy of the resources for the world solidarity fund, because it would be based on voluntary contributions with funding from Member States, foundations and the private sector. Mobilization would therefore be the critical factor in its success.

36. *Mr. Suazo (Honduras) resumed the Chair.*

37. **Archbishop Martino** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, although progress was being made towards achieving the millennium target of halving world poverty by 2015, too many people continued to live without access to basic requirements, and without hope. The effects which that lack of access had on people's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being should be the focus of discussions on poverty eradication.

38. His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/211), but could not agree with its statement (para. 22) that social obstacles could also be powerful impediments to economic development and poverty eradication, some of the most significant among them being population growth and a lack of access to education and health care. Many factors other than population growth played a role, notably natural disasters, armed conflict, or the oppression which caused the movement and displacement of persons, separation from homes and families and the disruption of lives. His delegation considered that the statement was not only untrue but also harmful to those struggling to overcome the burdens of poverty and the vulnerability that came with it. Even if the world experienced zero population growth over the next 13 years, the goals and targets set at the Millennium Summit would not be met. The elimination of poverty required great effort and political will. The Holy See would continue to call for justice and recognition of human dignity, which would lead to the eradication of poverty. It was the hope of the Holy See that the dialogue would continue, and that words would be put into action. Those living in extreme poverty could not wait until 2015 simply to be told that the goals set in 2000 had unfortunately not been met. Instead, the world community should promise to free all people from extreme poverty, which the Pope had described as the most pervasive and paralysing form of violation of human rights in the world.

39. **Mr. Malanda** (Congo) said that the eradication of hunger and poverty was one of the major challenges facing the international community, which had the capacity to find appropriate solutions. There had been a number of major international conferences in the two years since the Millennium Declaration had set the target of halving world poverty by 2015, and it was now necessary to move on to specific measures to reduce or cancel the heavy debt burden borne by the poor countries of the world, to guarantee their products access to the markets of the developed countries, and to increase ODA. Only by radical solutions could the poor countries secure the necessary resources for economic growth. Some 70 per cent of his compatriots lived below the poverty threshold on less than one dollar a day, while according to the latest IMF figures his country's external debt had risen to US$ 5 billion. The Government of the Congo had put the struggle against poverty at the centre of its development policy, establishing a national committee under the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Budget to tackle it. It had also been engaged in preliminary discussions with the World Bank with a view to agreeing on a strategic framework for poverty reduction. Once approved, that framework would enable the Congo to benefit from the HIPC initiative. Poverty eradication was primarily a matter for the States concerned, but it was vital for national policies to enjoy sustained support from all development partners.

40. His delegation would fully cooperate with the Committee in its efforts to make the world solidarity fund for poverty eradication operational. It also called for the adoption of courageous resolutions to provide substantial support to NEPAD, to cancel the debt of all HIPC countries and to increase ODA.

41. **Mr. Kommasith** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that, in a globalized world, poverty and underdevelopment were no longer problems exclusively of developing countries. Their consequences had spread, and not a single country in the world was immune to their effects. Progress in the past two years towards the target of halving world poverty by 2015 had been slow and uneven, and according to a number of estimates the target was unlikely to be met. The reasons for such slow progress — insufficient and inefficient public

spending, the heavy debt burden, inadequate access to the markets of developed countries and insufficient ODA — had to be addressed immediately. While national ownership and the primary responsibility for development lay with national governments, only a handful of them had any chance of succeeding without genuine international cooperation. In the past two years, many new commitments had been made and many old pledges reiterated, which should be honoured and fully implemented. His own country was committed to poverty eradication and sustainable development and had set itself the goal of shedding its least developed country status by 2020 by means of a national poverty eradication programme. His delegation joined others in urging all development partners to honour their commitment to increase ODA to the agreed level of 0.7 per cent of GNP, and fully supported the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication.

42. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) said that his delegation welcomed the proposal to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication. If donor countries had kept their often-repeated commitment to earmark 0.7 per cent of GNP for ODA, the world would not be struggling with the scourge of poverty. He agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal to have the fund managed through the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

43. **Mr. Ragab** (Egypt) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and emphasized the need for swift implementation of the recommendations of United Nations development-related conferences, particularly in relation to ODA, with a view to attaining the goals set for poverty eradication. The international community should lend its support to national institutions which offered financing and other services to small projects, in which connection it should also encourage the major financial institutions to provide access to capital. It was similarly important to focus on education as a means of increasing capacities at the international, regional and national levels with the aim of building human resources in the developing countries in the interests of ongoing development. Moreover, the necessary funding should be provided for channelling into the rural communities inhabited by the majority in the developing world. The same applied to assistance for the improvement of services and health and environmental infrastructures in the developing countries, particularly in Africa, with a view to sustainable development and optimal use of natural resources. It was also essential to implement global policies and initiatives aimed at ensuring the flow of information, technology and research, which were essential for planning the international strategy for capacity-building in the developing countries. Furthermore, national poverty-eradication efforts which had borne fruit should be emulated elsewhere, with care to avoid duplication. In short, the time had come for decisive action to tackle poverty and its causes, including the ignorance to which it was closely linked, failing which both security and the environment would further deteriorate to the detriment of all.

44. **Mr. Tin** (Myanmar) said that his delegation wished to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Despite the progress made over the past 20 years in reducing poverty worldwide, much remained to be done, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The successful implementation of NEPAD could contribute greatly to reducing poverty in Africa. His delegation welcomed the announcement by the G-8 countries at their meeting in Canada regarding their readiness to provide much-needed assistance to Africa. He was also heartened by the recent commitments made by the United States and the European Union at the International Conference on Financing for Development to increase their development assistance. Debt relief to heavily indebted countries initiated by the World Bank was also instrumental in the reduction of poverty.

45. The Government of Myanmar attached great importance to poverty eradication and rural development. It had promoted rural development by various means, including road construction, health and education services and a 10-year rural water supply project. Another notable project with a significant impact on poverty eradication was the one entitled "Progress of Border Areas and National Races", which was aimed at improving living conditions of people residing in the remote border areas and reducing illicit drug production and trafficking by providing an alternative livelihood for the local population. The water project and the border area project had benefited from the participation of United Nations agencies such as UNDP and UNDCP.

46. **Mr. Kyazze** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that UNESCO had a long-term strategy for the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty. In the Organization's medium-term strategy for 2002-2007, poverty was a cross-cutting theme and a priority. Accordingly, UNESCO was focusing on advocacy and information, assistance to member States for policy formulation and implementation, policy-oriented research, capacity-building, and innovative field projects.

47. Education and poverty eradication were inextricably linked, and investment in education was one of the most important determinants of human welfare. Moreover, the lack of appropriate educational opportunities for girls and women had a bearing on the feminization of poverty. Access to basic education for all and equality of educational opportunities were therefore vital for reducing the inequalities between and within societies. As stated in the World Declaration on Education for All, education was required by human beings to be able to survive and develop their full capacities. Moreover, as recognized in paragraph 6 of the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All (EFA) was a human right. It had been further recognized that Literacy for All was at the heart of basic Education for All. Literacy was critical for quality of life improvement. The forthcoming United Nations Literacy Decade, in which UNESCO would play the leading role, should therefore not be seen as an isolated or parallel initiative, but as an integral part of EFA.

48. To reduce the vulnerability and the insecurity of those living in poverty and to bring lasting improvements in their lives, it was important to ensure that they not only benefited from investment in education, health or other basic requirements, but that they were also able to secure a sustainable livelihood. In order to be effective, poverty-eradication strategies must also address the broader issues related to the people's livelihood, with due regard for the local cultural context.

49. In paragraph 8 (ii) of the Dakar Framework for Action, governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum had pledged to promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies. UNESCO, in close cooperation with member States, the United Nations system, the World Bank and relevant NGOs, intended to be an increasingly major player in the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

50. **Ms. Lewis** (International Labour Organization) said that the international community could no longer ignore the links between human security and poverty. Productive employment was one of the major routes out of poverty. The promotion of productive employment was at the heart of her Organization's decent work agenda and encapsulated its contribution to the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. Past prescriptions for economic growth which had not taken into account the need for employment creation had exacerbated human insecurity. The ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization was working to promote globalization as a means of reducing poverty and unemployment.

51. With the majority of poor people engaged in small or own-account enterprises in developing countries, ILO was making major efforts to eradicate poverty through its InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment Through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED). The Organization was also trying to improve the situation of workers in the areas of microinsurance, HIV/AIDS, youth employment, equal opportunities for women, small enterprise start-up and placing employment at the centre of macroeconomic policy.

52. On the inter-agency front, ILO and UNDP had set up a joint task force to develop a programme on employment and poverty which involved collaborative research as well as cooperation at the national and international levels. The International Labour Organization and the World Bank were collaborating closely on the inclusion of a work component in poverty-reduction strategies.

53. While employment was essential for reducing poverty, the work available must not be exploitative, and a rights-based approach to poverty eradication remained crucial. Her Organization was concerned with monitoring the ratification and implementation of Conventions to protect the rights of people in the workplace. It was also concentrating its efforts on the four areas of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: child labour, forced labour, discrimination and freedom of association.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.